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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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Meeting Minutes  
April 13, 2010 – 7:30pm

### Attendance

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*Commission Members:* Daphne Collins, Chair; Philip Plottel, Vice Chair; Jack Leader, Secretary; Jerry Adams; Matthew Cuddy; Charles Eisenberg; Jane Ives; Peter Kai Jung Lew

*Staff:* Amanda Stout, Sr. Economic Development Planner; Eve Tapper, Chief Zoning Official

*Guests:* Ald. Jay Harney; Ald. Amy Sangiolo; Pat Costello; Bill Renke; Chris Steele

*Absent:* Robert Gifford, Bruce Gold, Caroline O’Leary, John Pears

### Agenda Items

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#### *Introduction of New Staff*

Amanda Stout, Senior Economic Development Planner, introduced herself. She will be staffing this committee.

#### *Riverside*

City staff gave a brief update on the March 11, 2010 community meeting that was held by the City of Newton Planning and Development Department and distributed copies of the one page handout from that meeting. Developer BH Normandy had scheduled a community meeting for March 31, 2010, but then cancelled the meeting. The Riverside MBTA Station Redevelopment: Traffic Impact and Access Study, prepared for BH Normandy, prepared by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (March 2010) has been released and is available on the City website. There was a long discussion about the merits and details of the Riverside project and EDC’s role in helping the City move forward. The City is pursuing a new mixed-use zone in the Riverside area. All City information on the project can be found on the website: <http://www.newtonma.gov/Planning/Riverside/Riverside.htm>.

#### *Old Business*

Deluxe Station Diner - The Deluxe Station Diner (70 Union Street) passed the Board of Aldermen Land Use Committee 8-0.

Meals Tax - City staff updated the committee on Meals Tax revenue. The City received \$88,000 for the month of January and expects to receive \$86,000 for the month of February. If this trend continues, then the total January-May funds will be lower than anticipated. The EDC discussed other cities that have received higher than anticipated revenues from the Meals Tax and will monitor this issue.

Austin Street - An RFI has not yet been released for the Austin Street site; it is in the City’s Legal Department. There was some confusion and discussion of an RFP having been issued for the site, and the EDC asked to see a copy of the RFP. *NOTE: – The discussion led to the erroneous conclusion that there is an RFP. However, there is no RFP; City staff will keep the EDC apprised of future changes.*



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Newton Villages - Matt Cuddy said that the non-profit is currently planning a parking forum, ideally for June, with parking experts, merchants and restaurant owners, and Aldermen. He asked for suggestions of speakers or outreach efforts.

Needham Street – The EDC discussed various commercial projects along Needham Street.

Annual Report – Daphne Collins is interested in keeping more thorough and organized notes on the EDC's involvement in projects and wants to revive the practice of writing an Annual Report of the committee's work. The most recent such Annual Report dates to 2006. City staff will discuss further with Daphne and agrees that this is not only important, but is required according to the Sec. 22-95 of the Newton Ordinances, which states that the EDC is obligated "to prepare and transmit to the board of aldermen, annually during the month of February, a report of said commission's activities and of its recommendations for improving the economic condition and development of the city."

#### ***New Business***

Permit streamlining – Phil Plottel proposed an agenda item for discussion at the May EDC meeting: Item #474-08 docketed on the ZAP agenda regarding special permit granting authority.

Green Communities Act – Eve Tapper briefly talked about the City's application to become a Green Community. Amanda Stout will provide an update at the May EDC meeting. The EDC members expressed interest in further discussion and future action, including helping the City take advantage of grant money, raising Newton's profile as a "bio-ready community," and other ways in which being a Green Community can help Newton become both more sustainable and more economically competitive with its neighboring cities and towns.

#### ***Action Items***

Daphne Collins proposed that the EDC take an active role in gathering quantitative data about real estate in Newton. Other committee members agreed that this would be helpful to the EDC's work in performing market analysis, evaluating the Riverside project, and making informed recommendations about development proposals throughout the City. Members were particularly interested in gathering data on vacancies in different classes of office space. This will be discussed at future meetings.

For the June EDC meeting, the EDC would like City staff to provide information on the City's timeline and process for rezoning properties from a public use zone. This is particularly relevant to Riverside, but is useful to understand for other projects, as well. *NOTE: Staff distributed to EDC members a handout with a schematic timeline that was prepared for the 3/11 Riverside community meeting.*

City staff will purchase a tape recorder for the purpose of recording future meetings. As is the practice with other City committees, the tape will be available on-line and action minutes will include highlights and committee decisions. A revised contact list of all EDC members will be distributed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Stout

Sr. Economic Development Planner